



HOUNSLOW FRIENDS OF FAITH

Newsletter ~ April/May 2020

Keeping you up to date with Interfaith and Community News

Dates of Future Events and Activities

It is twenty years since Hounslow Friends of Faith began in the year 2000. The Brahma Kumaris were designated as Ambassadors of Peace for the Millennium and invited faith groups in Hounslow to a meeting in their centre in Bath Road on 14th September 2000 and from this small beginning Hounslow Friends of Faith grew. Recently on Friday 27th March the message was received that Dadi Janki, the Spiritual Head of the Brahma Kumaris worldwide, had died aged 104 years. Her personal lessons in wisdom and courage which she shared throughout her life are treasured and will always be remembered.

It is hoped to have a celebration to mark the twentieth anniversary of HFOF during National Interfaith Week on **Saturday 14th November** this year, but like all other organisations our gathering together has ceased for the present time and planning for the future is not possible until the coronavirus crisis is over. The meeting to discuss organ donation on 2nd April was cancelled. Also sadly there will be no Annual Walk of Peace and Friendship this summer and the HFOF **AGM** in the diary for **Wednesday 22nd July** may have to be postponed.

There is an **Interfaith Fun Run** planned for **Sunday 13th September** in the grounds of Osterley Park organised by *The Faith & Belief Forum* in partnership with Maccabi GB which hopefully can be held. This event will include a 1k and 5k fun run; performances from a diverse range of faith, belief and cultural groups; games and activities for families and food from around the world. The committee agreed that HFOF would register as a supporting charity.

Foundation Stones – a suggested activity for all ages during lockdown

HFOF would like to encourage everyone to paint a stone in remembrance of the six million Jewish men, women and children murdered in the Holocaust and all other victims of Nazi persecution. It is also possible to choose to dedicate your stone to those murdered in subsequent genocides in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur.

Foundation Stones from across the United Kingdom will be placed within the foundations of the new UK Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre in London. Each painted stone is a commitment to remember the past and to build a future free from all forms of prejudice, discrimination and hatred. For full details see:

<https://www.big-ideas.org/current-projects/foundation-stones/>

Help and Support available in Hounslow Borough during the Pandemic

There is much advice and support available during this challenging time of the coronavirus pandemic. Hounslow Council issues a daily coronavirus update with useful information; to subscribe to it email: hounslow@public.govdelivery.com

The Council's **Community Support Hub** – has been established to provide support for the most vulnerable residents identified by the NHS to be 'shielded'. These residents have serious long-term health conditions and are isolated. The council wants to ensure there are support networks in place for them. It is expected that there are over 3,000 such people in Hounslow. The Hub is also there for anyone else vulnerable and isolated who may not have been contacted by the NHS but needs urgent support and it will also connect people who need help in other ways to people and organisations who can help. The Council is working with community partners, businesses and local volunteers to make sure these people receive the supplies they need – whether it be food, or other essential support which may range from befriending to more complex care. On the Council's website there is a form for anyone wishing to volunteer.

Contact the Community Hub on: 020 7084 9697 or Hub@hounslow.gov.uk

The Council's website gives further advice about what help is available.

Hounslow Voice Network (previously Hounslow Community Network) – administered by Ealing CVS) asks:

Does your organisation need more volunteers?

Many voluntary and community organisations are now facing increased demand for their services and increased pressure on the volunteers that keep their organisations functioning. Therefore we want to hear from you if you need additional volunteers. Over the last week we have received numerous offers of support from businesses and hundreds of local residents have signed up through our Community Hub to volunteer. If this would be helpful please send us an email to info@ealingcvs.org.uk

- How many volunteers you need?
- When you need them?
- What you need them for?

We will try to find what you are looking for.

Information on Covid-19 for non UK nationals is on the Mayor of London / London Assembly website. The Government has released translated guidance for self-isolation; social distancing as well as shielding vulnerable people, into the following languages: Arabic, Bengali, Cantonese, Mandarin, French, Gujarati, Polish, Portuguese, Punjabi, Urdu and Welsh. Doctors of the World, in collaboration with other civil society partners, are also translating official government guidance on COVID-19 for patients. So far they have produced translations in over 30 languages and all are accessed via the link below:

<https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/eu-londoners-hub/information-covid-19-non-uk-nationals>

Faith groups and Community Groups have offered help in many ways

Some by pushing in leaflets locally such as this:



A group of Hounslow faith communities have joined together to advertise help:

HSPC

HOUNSLOW SOCIAL & POLITICAL COMMITTEE

CORONAVIRUS

PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT

Frail or vulnerable residents in the London Borough of Hounslow who need support with the below are urged to get in contact immediately



Shopping Deliveries



Practical Support



Medication Collection

Please call your local Centre below to discuss support and arrange a time slot

 <p>020 84329477</p>	 <p>07791 802786 / 07506 038393</p>	 <p>020 85707978</p>	 <p>07469 147968 / 07968 247806</p>	 <p>07958 007917 HMC 07947 254494</p>	 <p>07931 333611</p>
 <p>07788 942229</p>	 <p>07956 591769</p>	 <p>020 8577 2793</p>	 <p>0300 3651313</p>	 <p>020 85704774 HOUNSLOW FRIENDS OF FAITH 07928 345959</p>	 <p>020 85701999</p>



At this difficult time, **The Royal British Legion** is working hard to ensure our vital services and support remain available to the Armed Forces community.

The health of our beneficiaries, members, volunteers and Legion employees is our priority. Following Government advice, we have made some changes to ensure we continue to both support and protect our community.

Support The Legion continues to provide much needed support to the Armed Forces community, especially those who may be feeling more isolated than ever at this time, in a number of ways:

- The Legion's contact centre remains fully operational to support the Armed Forces community and can be reached on 0808 802 8080 (8am-8pm, seven days a week) or at info@britishlegion.org.uk
- The Legion continues to operate the Veterans' Gateway along with a network of Armed Forces organisations. The Gateway supports veterans and their families across a range of issues including housing, employment and finances. Advisers are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, on 0808 802 1212 or through www.veteransgateway.org.uk
- Legion Branches are undertaking a range of activities to help the vulnerable in their communities, including operating a telephone buddy service to support vulnerable individuals and our wider community. The Membership team can be contacted at membershipservices@britishlegion.org.uk
- Our Branch Community Support volunteers are exploring ways to provide remote support to beneficiaries.
- The Legion continues to operate its 6 care homes providing residential, nursing and specialist dementia care to approximately 450 veterans and their dependents.

In line with Government advice, the Legion's 15 Pop-In Centres on high streets around the UK have now closed until it is safe to reopen them. All home visits have been suspended to protect beneficiaries, staff and volunteers, and we are finding new ways of connecting, with casework and support continuing. Following the announcement of stronger restrictions on everyday life, we have closed our Aylesford poppy factory and the National Memorial Arboretum. Additionally, we have strongly recommended that all Legion branch meetings and Member events are cancelled or postponed.

Remembrance events With regards to the VE Day commemorations, the Legion has taken the difficult decision not to continue with plans to facilitate attendance for members of the Second World War generation at events in London for VE75. The Legion is working with the Government to develop alternative commemorations for VE Day.

The Legion has also taken the difficult decision not to continue with planned events in Bayeux to commemorate the 76th anniversary of D-Day. We are continuing to identify ways that we can still commemorate the anniversary of D-Day on Saturday 6th June.

Campaigning Coronavirus is having an unprecedented impact across all statutory services, and those of charities. At this time, our primary focus is therefore on supporting Service personnel, veterans, and their families in whatever way they need us.

The Open Kitchen – continuing to serve those in need

Since 2018, **Muslim Hands** has been running a community kitchen called the Open Kitchen, for the homeless, low-income families and needy children in Hounslow from their base in Brentford. The kitchen is free and open to all, serving 100 hot, nutritious meals twice a day, seven days a week in a community-centred space where all are treated with respect and dignity.

Due to the coronavirus crisis, the kitchen is now running a takeaway service for service users and home deliveries for people in self-isolation to ensure that they can continue to provide this vital service during the current outbreak. They have also implemented a strategy for volunteers to reach out to communities, aiming to increase the number of vulnerable people being helped. To donate to support this charity:

<https://muslimhands.org.uk/appeals/coronavirus-appeal>



HELPLINE FOR FAITH INSTITUTIONS
0333 772 1989
EVERY DAY OF THE WEEK, 1PM-7PM

Call our team of expert consultants for up-to-date support during this critical time.

CALL US ON 0333 772 1989 OR SEND US AN EMAIL AT INFO@SFITOGETHER.ORG

www.sfitogether.org

SFI | Strengthening Faith Institutions

WE CAN HELP WITH:

- Local and National Government economic support schemes
- Charity Registration
- Gift Aid
- Legal matters
- counseling support
- Safeguarding children online
- Health and well-being
- Volunteer opportunities
- technical and financial support for online engagement

Let us join in thanking and remembering all in the NHS and other front line and essential staff in our thoughts and prayers as they continue to work for the good of everyone in our communities



Some Past Events and Activities to which members of HFOF were invited

A Visit to the St Mary & Pope Kyrillos VI Coptic Orthodox Church Heston in February
Hounslow Friends of Faith were invited on Monday 3rd February to join committee members of the *International Association of Religious Freedom*, following their regular meeting, for lunch and a presentation by Father Morkos Fakhry Gamil giving the history of the Coptic Church. A number from HFOF and MP Ruth Cadbury accepted the invitation and enjoyed their visit.



Pope Tawadros II and Prime Minister Sisi



Charanjit AjitSingh and Father Morkos

After lunch Mrs Charanjit AjitSingh, as a committee member of each organisation, gave a brief introduction about the *International Association of Religious Freedom* and HFOF. Then Father Morkos gave a comprehensive history about the Orthodox Coptic Church. Here are some of the facts he shared. The Christian message was first brought to Egypt by St Mark who is known as the first Pope of Alexandria. During the time of the Roman Empire Christians suffered persecution particularly under Emperor Diocletian. Important theologians from the Coptic Church include: Origen, Athanasius and Cyril the Great. The monastic way of life also started in Egypt with St Anthony, St Pacomius and St Shenouda. The Great Schism between the Oriental Orthodox Church and the Western Church occurred in 451 AD following the Council of Chalcedon when there was a difference of opinion about the language used to describe the nature of Jesus.

The Coptic Church survived the rise of Islam in Egypt in the seventh century. Public Christian teaching was not allowed but songs about faith were introduced.

Through the years the Coptic Church introduced schools for both boys and girls and had an early ability to print books. During the first half of the 20th century the church was very influential and there was a Coptic Prime Minister in 1908 but he was assassinated after only a year in office. Then during the time Nasser was Prime Minister there were economic changes and tensions and many Christians and Jews left the country. At the present time there are good relations between Prime Minister Sisi and Pope Tawadros II. Copts make up 15 – 20% of the population of Egypt.

The St Mary and Pope Kyrillos VI Coptic Orthodox Church in Heston was started six years ago and now serves the local community through providing worship services, support for homeless in Hounslow and music and other education sessions.

Father Morkos was thanked for his most interesting presentation and he and the management were thanked for their generous hospitality. Those who wished were given a tour of the church and shown the icons of the saints and the colourful windows depicting three miracles of Jesus raising the dead to life. An open invitation was given to attend worship - see the church's web site for details of times. It is not recommended that visitors attend on a Sunday as the church is always very full on that day for the three hour service.

On Monday 24th February the World Zoroastrian Centre in Feltham had its private road renamed *Freddie Mercury Close*



Hounslow Friends of Faith was represented by Trustee Abdul Majid and Secretary Barbara McIntivey at this event

Quote from a report on the WZO website:

'At a ceremony, on a very damp morning, surrounded by friends, family, residents and fans of the great singer and all the UK Committee members and supporters of the World Zoroastrian Organisation (WZO), Kashmira, Freddie's sister, pulled back the special cover to reveal the new street name. The sign is placed outside the WZO's head office, a Faith Group into which Freddie was born and remained up until his death. The WZO is now housed at 1 Freddie Mercury Close TW13 5DF.

The street name change came about after a conversation between the Mayor and Darayus S Motivala, Joint Honorary Secretary of WZO, at an

Inter Faith event at WZO last July (our HFOF Walk) when a number of guests were delayed as they could not find the venue. Darayus mentioned to the Mayor that other visitors to the building were having the same problem and asked if this mainly private section of the road could be given a unique name and postcode. When the Mayor asked what name should be used, Darayus instantly suggested Freddie Mercury Close for very obvious reasons.

After the street unveiling, the guests were welcomed into WZO's Communal hall by Darayus Motivala and introduced some of the dignitaries who had taken time off to attend the ceremony. They included Lord Karan Bilimoria of Chelsea, Seema Malhotra the local Labour MP, Shahpur Captain, Chairman of WZO and of course the Mayor Councillor Tony Louki and Kashmira Bulsara.After presentations, some of the guests went to the Satayesh Gah to witness a Boi ceremony performed by WZO's new resident priest, Fali Madon and his brother, Jimmy. Although Freddie was born in Zanzibar (a part of Tanzania), under his family name of Farrokh Bulsara, he moved to Feltham along with his family to a house at 22 Gladstone Avenue, Feltham. After first studying art at Isleworth Polytechnic, now West Thames College, Mercury studied graphic art and design at Ealing Art College, now a part of University of West London, from where he graduated with a diploma in 1969, a year before he formed the band with whom he will forever be associated, Queen.'

On Saturday 7th March HFOF Secretary Barbara McIntivey attended the Women's Day Meeting at the **Baitul Wahid Mosque in Hanworth Park. It was interesting to hear from a panel of young women about their experiences of growing up in the Muslim faith and also about opportunities for non-contact boxing locally. Afterwards there was a chance to socialise with other ladies present whilst enjoying the tasty refreshments provided.**

Best wishes to all those who will be observing days of special significance despite not being able to gather together in places of worship

April

- 2nd **Rama Navami** Hindu celebration of the birth of Rama
- 7th – 8th **Hanuman Jayanti** when Hindus commemorate the birth of Hanuman
- 5th – 11th **Holy Week** for Christians begins with Palm Sunday; and includes Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday
- 6th **Mahavira Jayanti** Jain celebration of the birth of Mahavira their 24th Tirthankar or Spiritual teacher
- 12th **Easter Sunday** (19th Orthodox Christians) when Christians celebrate the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.
- 8th **Hanamatsuri** when Buddhists commemorate the birth of the Buddha
- 8th **Night of forgiveness** 2 weeks before Ramadan, Muslims seek forgiveness for their sins and spend the night in prayer
- 9th – 16th **Passover/Pesach** when Jews remember the liberation of the Israelites and their Exodus from slavery in Egypt
- 13th – 15th **Songkran** - Buddhist New Year's Day festival
- 14th Sikh **Vaisakhi** the Sikh New Year remembering the founding of the Order of the Khalsa in 1699 by the tenth Guru, Gobind Singh
- 20th April
-1st May **Ridvan** Baha'u'llah declared himself the Promised One prophesied by the Bab. Baha'is elect their local, national and international governing bodies.
- 21st **Adar Mah Parab** Zoroastrian celebration of the birthday of fire. Zoroastrians visit the fire temple to give thanks for its warmth and light.
- 21st **Yom Hashoah** (Holocaust Day) Jewish Day to remember the 6 million Jewish victims of the Nazi holocaust.
- 23rd **St Georges Day** – Patron saint of England
- 24th Muslim **Ramadan** month of fasting begins

May

- 7th Buddhist **Vesakha Puja/ Buddha Day**
- 21st Christian – **Ascension Day** the returning of the risen Jesus into heaven
- 23rd Zoroastrian **Zaratosht no-Diso** is a commemoration of the death of the prophet Zoroaster.
- 24th **Eid-ul-Fitr** Muslim end of Ramadan

May

29th – 30th Jewish **Shavuot** marks the wheat harvest in Israel and it commemorates the anniversary of the day when God gave the Torah to the nation of Israel

31st **Pentecost** - Christians celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit

Prayer for a Pandemic

May we who are merely inconvenienced
Remember those whose lives are at stake.

May we who have no risk factors
Remember those most vulnerable.

May we who have the luxury of working from home
Remember those who must choose between preserving their health or making their rent.

May we who have the flexibility to care for our children when their schools close
Remember those who have no options.

May we who have to cancel our trips
Remember those that have no safe place to go.

May we who are losing our margin money in the tumult of economic conflict
Remember those who have no margin at all.

May those of us who settle in for quarantine at home
Remember those who have no home.

As fear grips our country
Let us choose love.

During this time when we cannot physically wrap our arms around each other,
Let us yet find ways to be the loving embrace of God to our neighbours. Amen.

Please send details of any religious festivals, special events or items of interest which you wish to be included in the next newsletter to info@hounslowfriendsoffaiith.org by 25th May.

Please note: If you are receiving this newsletter as the named person from an organisation please circulate it within your group and do let me know if there is someone else to whom it should be sent as well as/or instead of you.